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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. ELARABY	(Egypt)
later:	Mr. PATOKALLIO (Vice-Chairman)	(Finland)
later:	Mr. ELARABY (Chairman)	(Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the first speaker on the list for this morning, I shall make a statement as Chairman of the First Committee. (spoke in Arabic)

The present-day world is in the grip of radical and far-reaching, rapidly occurring developments that will shape our future. They are taking place at so rapid a pace that it is sometimes difficult to take stock of them, assess their possible results or predict the future their interaction will create.

The international community follows these developments with mixed feelings that range from optimism to concern.

On the one hand, there is optimism because these developments have been instrumental in putting an end to the cold war between East and West. This, in turn, has markedly improved many aspects of international relations. The end of the era of confrontation has revived the hopes of the peoples of the world in an era of peace, justice, cooperation and stability.

On the other hand, these developments have recently tended to give rise to new conflicts of a different nature and to create new hotbeds of tension. The international community stands almost powerless before such phenomena, and this has resulted in a general feeling of concern and insecurity.

The responsibility for dealing with these international developments lies with us all, equally. The starting-point for meeting the current challenges - of moving forward on disarmament and of maintaining international peace and security - is for all States to recognize the commonality of interest and the equality of rights and duties. That would make it possible to formulate and lay the foundations of the norms and principles that should govern international relations now and in the future.

(The Chairman)

The lofty purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which were inspired by interaction between the cultures of the many peoples of the world, are but reflections of the legitimate hopes and aspirations of the Members of the Organization. That is why the United Nations Charter remains the solid foundation for our unremitting efforts to develop a world order which, we hope, will bring us peace, justice, equality, freedom and prosperity.

Hence it may be useful, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, to take a fresh look at the Charter, to examine it comprehensively and realistically and to determine whether its provisions, which shape the framework of international relations and the role of the Organization and its machinery, are compatible with the changes that have taken place on the international scene - especially in the light of the increasing dependence on the United Nations in the search for solutions to the political, economic and social problems of our world.

On the subject of current international developments, it behoves us to highlight their positive influence on disarmament. The end of confrontation between the two super-Powers was conducive to the creation of a climate that made it possible for them to conclude several significant and effective agreements whose benefits include not only the simple halting of the nuclear-arms race but the achievement of constructive progress towards the actual reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

The disappearance of tension between the two super-Powers has also afforded us a real opportunity to curb the development of new nuclear weapons.

The declaring of moratoriums on nuclear testing by a number of nuclear-weapon States gives rise to the hope that this trend will endure, expand and prevail, and that it will lead to tangible progress in the

(The Chairman)

negotiations within the framework of the partial test-ban Treaty and the efforts to achieve a total ban on such testing. This is an objective that, for many States, remains in the forefront of their disarmament priorities.

By the same token, let us not overlook the progress achieved in controlling conventional weapons, both internationally and regionally, as a result of the improved climate of international relations.

Appreciative as we are of all those disarmament measures, it is to be hoped that their consolidation will lead to further achievements. The road remains long, arduous and full of obstacles.

The United Nations has been mandated to play a more active and effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the containment of crises. So long as this remains the conviction of the overwhelming majority of Member States - as is clear from the statements in the Assembly's general debate - the Organization will be required to shoulder its responsibility in addressing the issue of disarmament, as this is closely linked to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 11 of the Charter clearly defines the responsibility of the General Assembly in considering the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the regulation of armaments. Article 26 defines the responsibility of the Security Council in formulating a system for the regulation of armaments. Thus, the Charter clearly confirms the close interrelationship between disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is clear from the provisions of those two articles of the Charter that the intention of its authors was to establish a system of collective security

(The Chairman)

that, on the basis of the principles of justice and equality enshrined in the Charter, would guarantee stability for all nations and spare them the dangers of military confrontation.

To achieve this, a single standard should be used in dealing with all States in implementing every United Nations resolution. This would increase confidence in the credibility of disarmament agreements and make States more willing to implement them.

In this context, I cite the importance of examining the proposal that the Security Council, under Chapter VII of the Charter, provide the States that choose not to possess weapons of mass destruction with credible security assurances of protection from the use or threat of use of such weapons against them. This would strengthen the regimes of prohibition and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and motivate all States to respond positively to all disarmament agreements.

(The Chairman)

The dangers of armament, especially with nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, threaten all nations equally. Logic therefore ordains that all members of the international community should participate on an equal footing in establishing the required mechanisms for the elimination of these dangers, within a global framework that would guarantee a fair balance between rights and obligations without any double standards in their enforcement.

The bilateral steps taken so far are indeed credible and effective. However, it would be a mistake to consider them the ideal approach to progress in the field of disarmament. It is an approach that may have been required at an earlier stage, but it is not necessarily compatible with the realities of the present international environment, which is characterized by the call for dialogue, cooperation and the strengthening of mutual confidence and collaboration among all members of the international community as they lay the foundations of peace.

The United Nations and its disarmament organs could play an increasingly expanding and effective role in this regard if the sincere political will existed to strengthen the trend that has lately produced such very positive results as the conclusion of the draft Convention on chemical weapons by the Conference on Disarmament and the adoption by consensus of the recommendations of the Disarmament Commission on objective information on military matters.

One of the important steps that could be taken to strengthen the call for disarmament is to ensure universal participation by all members of the international community in the elaboration of disarmament agreements. That would create confidence that such agreements accurately reflect the interests of every member of the international community.

(The Chairman)

In this regard, we should not overlook the importance of the regional approach to disarmament. Every region has its own distinctive characteristics that we must take into full account when dealing with regional disarmament agreements. Such an approach to disarmament issues will ensure the universality of the measures taken and guarantee their proper implementation, since they will have been reached democratically, without encroachment on the interests of any party, and since they would impose equal obligations on all. History has so developed that interdependence and interaction must guide the actions of all members of the international community. Globalism has become a reality that cannot be ignored in the fond belief that individual gains can be achieved at the expense of the interests of others.

Finally, the work of our Committee this year will embrace a number of important issues, such as those relating to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regimes, the prohibition of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the control of conventional weapons, increased transparency in military matters, confidence-building measures, the provision of security assurances to States that do not possess weapons of mass destruction, and other issues of interest. It is incumbent upon us all to give those issues due consideration, since international peace and security cannot be strengthened unless we find practical solutions to all of the problems involved. Though the task is difficult, the benefits are great.

(spoke in English)

Before concluding my opening statement, I should like to welcome my old friend, a very distinguished diplomat, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Under-Secretary-General who is responsible for disarmament affairs. It is a

(The Chairman)

great pleasure to have him with us, and I am sure that with his vast knowledge and experience in disarmament affairs, we will all benefit from his presence.

I should also like to welcome the presence and cooperation of Mr. Berasategui, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference on Disarmament; Mr. Davinic; and of course our very able Committee Secretary, Mr. Kheradi.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 to 65; 68 and 142; and 67 and 69

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs): It is a great pleasure for me to be here at the opening of the debate in the First Committee at this forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am particularly pleased to see a dear and old friend of mine, Ambassador Nabil Elaraby, at the helm of the First Committee this year. I am sure that the First Committee could not be in better hands during this crucial moment in its work.

While I am no stranger to this Committee, this is my first opportunity to be here in my new capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, which includes disarmament. I would therefore like to assure members of my full support in making their work as smooth as possible. I look forward to cooperating with them in our common endeavour.

The world of today differs considerably from the world of only a few years ago, when I was in this Committee as a representative of my country. It was a time when our efforts in the field of disarmament were still

(Mr. Petrovsky)

overshadowed by the atmosphere of the cold war. Under the circumstances, our endeavours were aimed primarily at maintaining a balance of forces between the two major alliances and at averting the possibility of a nuclear war.

At the same time, despite the unfavourable political environment, there were fortunately some important achievements in the multilateral field of disarmament. Those achievements, which have been translated into some 11 global multilateral agreements concluded by the international community, provide us today with a firm foundation on which to build. Of course, much remains to be done, and we should therefore use the experience we have accumulated under rather adverse circumstances to our best advantage, now that we have much more positive international conditions, and really push the process of genuine disarmament forward.

The world has since entered a new era of cooperation and there is increased hope that a more stable peace and security based on the United Nations Charter - what is, for me, really a pax United Nations - can be achieved. At no time since the Second World War has there been as great an opportunity to make progress on arms control and disarmament issues. In this connection, it is a most welcome development that disarmament is now more than ever regarded as one of the key elements in the integrated approach to international peace and security that has developed in the past years.

As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his "Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), international peace and security must now be pursued through preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping, and post-conflict peace-building. The importance of addressing such root causes of conflict as economic despair, social injustice, and political oppression was also emphasized. There are many ways in which disarmament can make a concrete, tangible contribution to this process.

(Mr. Petrovsky)

One area of concern underlined in the general debate of the General Assembly this year was the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction. At the same time, much praise was voiced for the draft Convention on chemical weapons and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Practical reality demonstrates that the issue of non-proliferation in all its aspects, as a comprehensive issue, is becoming one of the most important subjects on the disarmament agenda, including as it does not only nuclear but all weapons of mass destruction, as well as their means of delivery and the dual-purpose technology that may be transferred for non-peaceful purposes. In addition, recent increases in weapons transfers, particularly into areas of tension and conflict, give us cause for much apprehension.

Without dwelling unnecessarily on this year's agenda, I would only submit that, if the Committee succeeds and I sincerely hope it will - in agreeing on the next steps to be taken in connection with the draft Convention on chemical weapons and the Register of Conventional Arms, the Committee will have made a major leap forward in furthering the cause of arms control and disarmament.

Another emerging issue of increasing importance relates to the so-called immediate post-disarmament efforts. There are many aspects of the problem with which we have to deal. In my opinion, two of them, owing to their urgency and complexity, stand out, namely, the safe destruction and storage of armaments resulting from various disarmament agreements and the conversion of military capacities to peaceful purposes. Close attention should also be given to items related to regionally based disarmament and confidence-building measures, since they have the greatest potential for reinforcing the process of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking with which the United Nations is greatly involved today.

(Mr. Petrovsky)

I say this because now more than ever we need to approach our work with a high dose of realism and to make action-oriented recommendations that can bring about pragmatic changes in these and other areas of our concern. The issues I have just mentioned are only examples of areas in which such concrete action is called for on an urgent and compelling basis.

The time has come not only to inject into our efforts a note of urgency and increased pragmatism but also to place these efforts in a broader context. This demands a new approach from Member States in dealing with substantive issues. I hope that the Committee's deliberations will define that approach.

To my mind, the globalization of arms control and disarmament is the order of the day. We must involve in this process all the countries in the world and tackle all issues affecting such integral parts of international peace and stability and disarmament.

To facilitate the achievement of that goal we need to improve the machinery of multilateral disarmament, and I think that a first step is the organization of the work of the First Committee in the most rational way. I am sure that under the able leadership of Ambassador Elaraby, it will be possible to make this session of the Committee a turning-point in these areas.

The United Nations Secretariat, for its part, stands ready to work most actively with Member States in furthering these objectives in a constructive and pragmatic manner.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate my view that we should not allow the momentum generated in the field of arms control and disarmament to dissipate. Rather, we should use it to our greatest benefit so as to allow the world Organization to fulfil the unique role that it can play in promoting

(Mr. Petrovsky)

disarmament and maintaining peace and stability. The First Committee has a crucial task to accomplish, and I should like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to all of you and to wish you all success in your important work.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The year 1992 is a year of anniversaries, and today, 12 October, we are commemorating nothing less than the fifth centennial of the encounter between two worlds, the American and the European. In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in search of a new route to the Indies, and on this day he happened upon America. From that time on, America changed radically. Europe too was transformed, and the world has never been the same.

The year 1992 has been a watershed for Europe, America and the rest of the world, as was the year 1492. Today, as 500 years ago, we are witnessing internal readjustments in many countries and regions and a reorientation of their relations with the rest of the world. Just as happened half a millenium ago, there are those who act as if the rest of the world did not exist while others are seeking new horizons. Today, as 500 years ago, we are living through a time of apprehension and of hope.

With the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact, the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are scrambling to redefine their military strategies. Some have already begun to reduce their armies and military budgets with a view to moving from defence against possible attack on their own territory to rapid-deployment forces. The latter was one of the lessons of the Gulf War. The week before last, NATO launched its multinational Rapid Reaction Corps.

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

Changes in the international climate have also been felt in multilateral forums. Since 1989 some countries have begun to change their positions on certain fundamental issues. Proposals have been submitted to modify the multilateral agenda, and there have been drastic structural changes in international organizations themselves. But it was as a result of the actions taken by the Security Council in the case of Iraq that it became evident to what extent the world balance had shifted.

During the last session of the General Assembly there was tangible proof of those changes. To begin with, the 280 resolutions adopted by the Assembly in 1991 represent a reduction of nearly 20 per cent compared with 1990 and the lowest number in 15 years. Of those 280 resolutions, almost 80 per cent were adopted, as in 1990, without objection, that is, with no negative votes. It has been years since we have seen anything like this in the Assembly, and we hope that the trend continues.

With regard to disarmament items, the 38 resolutions adopted represented the lowest total since the 1970s. We should point out, however, that 17 of those resolutions - or 45 per cent - were put to a vote. Among them was resolution 46/38 C regarding the role of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In it, the Assembly reiterated that in the present international climate it was more than ever imperative to give additional impetus to negotiations on disarmament at all levels. Thus, the Assembly again called on the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its work on all of its agenda items through substantive negotiations within the framework of its ad hoc committees.

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

For some time the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to make any substantial progress on its agenda items except for the question of the elimination of chemical weapons. This year has been no exception. Nevertheless, in 1992 the Conference on Disarmament has submitted for consideration by the First Committee nothing less than a draft Convention for the total elimination of one type of weapon of mass destruction. Over 130 delegations, including my own, will introduce a draft resolution that would open for signature the draft Convention contained in document CD/1170. The Conference on Disarmament was able to finish the draft Convention this year thanks to the cooperation of its members and observers and thanks, in particular, to the dedication of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador von Wagner of Germany.

We are all aware why after more than a decade of negotiations it was possible to complete the text of the draft Convention. We also know that there are delegations which, like that of Mexico, will harbour certain doubts regarding some of the provisions of the Convention. But that should not be an obstacle to the adoption of this multilateral instrument by the General Assembly. Postponing its adoption could have unforeseen consequences detrimental to what has already been achieved. And much has been achieved: since the international community is about to agree on the total, supervised elimination of a category of weapons of mass destruction which, in spite of the restrictions on its use - restrictions accepted by all of the States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol - has been used in several international and internal armed conflicts.

Its conclusion is uncontestable proof that the States possessing weapons of mass destruction, as well as those that seek to obtain them, are willing to

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

eliminate them through a universal international treaty which is equitable for all parties. That was true 20 years ago in the case of biological weapons, and we hope that very soon the Conference on Disarmament will agree on a similar treaty on nuclear weapons, thus putting an end to all weapons of mass destruction - a goal which the United Nations set for itself decades ago.

In the view of the Mexican Government, the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in the achievement of disarmament. The Final Document of the 1978 special session of the General Assembly has not lost its validity; nor has the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, which is derived from that Document. Nevertheless, we are ready to explore, as we have been doing, ways to adapt that agenda to present demands, but without undermining the priorities on which we have agreed in the field of disarmament.

The current President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Servais of Belgium, has been requested to carry out consultations on the agenda of the Conference, as well as on the possible enlargement of its membership. All of us agree that the Conference should avoid wasting its time in meetings on some of its agenda items. Nevertheless, if we wish to improve the work of the Conference, we should also avoid ending up with an agenda composed completely of secondary items. Moreover, agreement was reached in the past on important texts regarding certain items; they should be maintained and brought up to date.

On the other hand, on the question of the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament we should take into account the so-called political balance - now non-existent - that gave rise to its composition in 1978. It thus seems advisable to move with caution at a time of political and military realignment.

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Our region rejoices at the concrete steps taken by several countries to consolidate the military denuclearization regime established by that Treaty. We are especially pleased that the Government of France deposited its instrument of ratification of Additional Protocol I on 24 August last. Furthermore, the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL) considered and adopted a series of amendments that will make it possible for the Treaty to enter fully into force soon in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. My delegation has begun consultations on a draft resolution on this item.

One of the subjects in which almost all Governments have been greatly interested and which is constantly reported on in the international press is the various aspects of the non-proliferation of weapons and weapons systems, especially nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Since the Conference on Disarmament has yet to examine these subjects in an appropriate format, my delegation proposed in January of this year that, without prejudice to its formal agenda, the Conference on Disarmament should consider the wide range of matters related to them. The proposal was well received and we held informal consultations open to all members of the Conference on Disarmament, in which an attempt was made to identify questions the Conference could examine more closely and, if desired, more formally. It is our intention to continue these consultations in 1993.

In 1993 we will also have to begin the preparatory process of the 1995 conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the one hand, the fifth NPT review conference will take place; on the

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

other, the States parties will also have to meet to decide by a majority whether the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods, in accordance with paragraph 2 of article X. The 1995 conference will therefore have to combine the five-year review of the Treaty with a discussion of its extension. This was proposed by the Depositaries themselves in 1990 in document NPT/CONF.IV/MC.II/WP.10/Rev.1 of 5 September 1990. And this is what should be agreed in the coming weeks when the Depositaries convene a meeting of the parties to discuss the draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly.

Moreover, the preparatory process should include discussions on the substance of the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in general and the Treaty's provisions in particular. The preparatory process for previous review conferences was largely procedural, and substantive discussions were put off until the conferences themselves. We believe that consideration of the substantive aspects of the NPT regime should not be postponed until 1995.

The NPT was the first international instrument aimed at preventing the horizontal proliferation of a specific type of weapon. To achieve this, the United States, the United Kingdom and the then USSR had to make certain concessions and commit themselves to negotiating agreements on the vertical non-proliferation of those weapons. And the key to halting both vertical and horizontal proliferation is a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. As the former Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Ambassador Gerard C. Smith, wrote in 1990:

> "It is difficult to conceive of any single measure that would do more to stem the spread of the nuclear scourge than a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing". (Arms Control Today, November 1990).

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

The past year has seen some encouraging events in this field. The former Soviet Union stopped testing nuclear weapons last year and the Russian Federation appears ready to honor that commitment. China and France have adhered to the NPT and France has declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests until the end of this year. Ten days ago the United States, at the urging of its Congress, began a nine-month nuclear-testing moratorium. As already noted, Argentina, Brazil and Chile will soon adhere to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. On 1 October the United States Senate ratified the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms - the START Treaty. And last autumn, a year before that ratification, the United States and the then USSR indicated their willingness to carry out unilateral reductions of various types of nuclear weapons and their missiles. These are important steps towards de-escalating the nuclear arms race; a comprehensive test-ban treaty would be a key component in that regard.

At the beginning of next year the Conference on Disarmament should establish an ad hoc committee on a nuclear-test ban with a negotiating mandate. This year the Conference on Disarmament has demonstrated in the field of chemical weapons what can be achieved when there is political will. If the Conference's work continues to stagnate, it could be advisable to reconvene the partial test-ban Treaty Amendment Conference. It might be useful for the parties to meet in the spring of next year to consider this question.

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

In conclusion, in 50 years it will probably make no difference whether nuclear testing ended through a multilateral treaty or through a gradual, unilateral reduction in the number of tests. In the short run, however, it is of vital importance that nuclear testing end with one final bang, with the fanfare that would undoubtedly accompany an internationally agreed comprehensive ban. Its political impact would be significant, especially for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the nuclear-weapon States, having set the example, would be in a position to exercise the moral authority to ensure a truly universal and non-discriminatory non-proliferation regime, thus contributing to a safer world for all.

It is always pleasant, Mr. Chairman, to meet friends once again, and it is especially gratifying to see friends occupying important posts such as yours. Your experience in this and other forums of the United Nations system ensures the success of our work. We were given evidence of that experience today in the conceptual clarity of your important opening statement. We are convinced that you will ably steer the future course of the First Committee in this time of difficult transition for our Organization. We congratulate you most sincerely, and we offer you and the other officers of the Committee the full cooperation of the Mexican delegation in the discharge of your important duties. We appreciate the presence in our midst of Under-Secretary-General Petrovsky and we welcome Ambassador Berasategui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Davinic and Mr. Kheradi.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the President of the Conference on Disarmament, who will introduce the report of the Conference.

Mr. SERVAIS (Belgium), President of the Conference on Disarmament (interpretation from French): I wish to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your wide knowledge and experience on matters relating to disarmament and related international security questions, which were highly valued in the Conference on Disarmament when you represented your great country there, as well as your remarkable competence and tact as a distinguished diplomat, augur well for the success of our deliberations. May I also convey to the other officers of the Committee my warm congratulations on their elections to the important responsibility of assisting you in guiding the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. I should also like to greet Mr. Petrovsky, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Berasategui, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have asked to speak today in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament to introduce the report of the Conference on its work during the 1992 session, which has been issued as Supplement No. 27 of the Official Records of the General Assembly under the symbol A/47/27. The presentation of the annual report this year is a major landmark for the single multilateral negotiating disarmament forum and is particularly gratifying for me as its President, since the Conference has succeeded in concluding the negotiations on the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, which was adopted and transmitted by consensus to the General Assembly, as noted in paragraph 74 of the annual report. The text of the draft Convention, as well as of other documents relating to its implementation, are contained in appendix I to the annual report.

(Mr. Servais, President,
Conference on Disarmament)

In transmitting this draft Convention to the General Assembly, the Conference has not only responded to the request made last year by the General Assembly in resolution 46/35 C, but to the concerns and aspirations that have long been expressed by the international community. Since 1962 the multilateral disarmament negotiating body had been considering, in one context or another, the question of the prohibition of all chemical weapons, a daunting task that implied nothing less than the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, they are weapons that have been used extensively in combat, with a staggering loss of life and much human suffering.

During the 1992 session 39 members of the Conference and a record number of 45 non-members participating in the work of the Conference were involved in difficult negotiations, which led to an instrument of a universal character that the General Assembly will be invited to approve and open for signature. I wish at this stage to pay a tribute to the remarkable skill, tact and patience shown by the last Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Adolph von Wagner of Germany, who did so much to make this long-waited agreement possible. I should like also recall the valuable contributions made at different stages of the work of the Conference by his predecessors in the Chair of that subsidiary body, some of whom are also attending this annual session of the First Committee.

The wide support that the draft Convention has elicited both among the participants in the negotiations - members and non-members of the Conference and Member States of the United Nations - is shown by the number of co-sponsors of the relevant draft resolution, which will be introduced soon in

(Mr. Servais, President, Conference on Disarmament)

this Committee. Therefore, there is no need for me to proceed to a detailed explanation of each of its provisions. May I, however, deal briefly with its most significant aspects, those which have ensured the universal appeal that the draft Convention is achieving.

The scope of the draft Convention, as defined in article I, contains a comprehensive prohibition which applies equally to all the parties. The prohibition on acquiring chemical weapons is complemented by a firm commitment to destroy existing weapons and production facilities. Violation of the provisions contained in the proposed instrument would lead to a wide range of actions, from assistance and protection against chemical weapons to various measures to ensure compliance, including sanctions, as envisaged in articles X and XII. The firm commitment to destroy existing chemical weapons and production facilities is complemented by the detailed provisions contained in articles IV and V, the elaboration of which took into account many factors involved in a safe and effectively verifiable process of destruction of weapons and facilities and, in exceptional cases, of the reconversion of certain facilities.

Article VIII of the draft Convention establishes the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention, to provide a forum for consultation and cooperation and to ensure its implementation, including international verification of compliance. I should stress, in this connection, the unique character of the verification system provided by articles VI and IX of the draft Convention and its relevant annex. For the first time in the history of multilateral disarmament agreements a truly international verification system has been developed, one

(Mr. Servais, President,
Conference on Disarmament)

that also covers challenge inspections, applicable to all parties and providing for effective assurances against non-compliance while at the same time respecting the development of the chemical industry for peaceful purposes.

Last but not least, the draft Convention contains in article XI a number of provisions on economic and technological development which are, by any standard, more concrete and precise than any other similar text adopted in the multilateral disarmament agreements in force at present.

I hope that the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction will be adopted by the General Assembly and that all States will soon reaffirm the wide support that it has obtained by becoming parties to it. In so doing, we shall all make a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security and open the way to further success in the field of disarmament. The draft Convention is also proof that multilateral negotiations in that field can play a vital role in the post-cold-war world. The Conference on Disarmament, in its unique position as a negotiating body with global responsibilities, is the basic instrument available to the international community to fulfil that role. The text of the agreement transmitted to the General Assembly in the report that I am introducing today confirms the value of the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating forum, reporting to the General Assembly on matters of universal concern.

(Mr. Servais, President, Conference on Disarmament)

I shall now turn to other matters contained in the report of the Conference on its 1992 session. In chapter II, the report deals with the organization of the work of the Conference. The agenda and programme of work were adopted at the very opening of the annual session, and the Conference also re-established four subsidiary bodies on various substantive items. As noted previously, an unprecedented number of 45 non-members were invited to participate in our work in 1992.

Pursuant to section F of that chapter, the Conference has requested me, with the assistance of the incoming President and the Secretary-General, to conduct consultations during the intersessional period on two important matters clearly linked to the future role of the multilateral disarmament negotiating body: its agenda and the expansion of its membership. Those consultations began in Geneva in September and will continue in the coming weeks. As indicated in the mandate given to me, I shall report back to the Conference at the beginning of the 1993 session. In the case of the expansion of the membership, paragraph 14 of the annual report reflects the commitment of the Conference to conducting a comprehensive review with a view of taking a positive decision next year. Such a decision would end a long and frustrating process of consultations on the selection of additional members. As regards the agenda, useful advice was offered me during the first round of talks held in Geneva.

Chapter III of the annual report describes the substantive work done in the consideration of the items on the agenda and other questions. I have already referred to the achievement this year of the draft Convention banning all chemical weapons and its significance for the international community.

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Clearly, most of the efforts of the Conference were devoted to the conclusion of that agreement. This fact should be taken into account in evaluating other aspects of its work during 1992.

Intensive consultations were held throughout the annual session on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, entitled "Nuclear test ban". While substantial progress was made in improving the previous mandate of that subsidiary body, no final agreement was possible before the end of the session, when negotiations on chemical weapons reached a critical stage. However, the Conference agreed to intensify its consultations with a view to re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1993 session. It should be noted that, as decided earlier this year by France, the nuclear-weapon State that had yet to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, that subsidiary body will now be joined by all nuclear-weapon Powers.

The Conference devoted seven informal meetings to the consideration of agenda items 2 and 3: "Cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament" and "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". While differences persisted on its role in dealing with those items, the Conference received the documents relating to the agreement reached on 17 June 1992 between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the reduction of the two nuclear arsenals to well below the totals agreed under the START Treaty.

Item 5 on the agenda, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", was considered as in previous years by an ad hoc committee. As noted in the report, the Ad Hoc Committee made progress in its efforts to identify areas of convergence suitable for a more structured work. A valuable and significant

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contribution to the discussion was made by experts from several delegations, and the preliminary work carried on by the Friends of the Chairman on various important issues was viewed as an encouraging development in the process of building upon the areas of convergence. Although cognizant of the various positions advanced, the Ad Hoc Committee recognized the importance of the presentations relating to confidence-building measures and to greater transparency and openness in space. The report includes a recommendation for re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of the 1993 session.

In connection with item 6, "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapons States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", the Ad Hoc Committee set up to consider it reported that specific difficulties remained with regard to the differing security perceptions of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. However, the Conference continued to recognize the importance of this question and felt that there was a need to take a fresh look at it, in the light of recent changes in the international political climate and other positive developments, in order to move forward in this extremely important area. It also recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee be re-established at the beginning of the 1993 session.

The Conference also re-established this year the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, relating to item 7 on the agenda, which continued work on the two aspects under consideration: the prohibition of radiological weapons in the traditional sense and issues relevant to the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. Different approaches continued to exist during 1992 with regard to both subjects. There is a recommendation in the report that the Ad Hoc Committee be re-established at the opening of the next

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annual session and that the Conference give guidance to that subsidiary body on reviewing the organization of its work.

Diverging views were also expressed in the Conference in connection with the question of the comprehensive programme of disarmament, item 8 on the agenda. The subject of an organizational framework for dealing with this item will again be considered at the beginning of the 1993 session.

Having considered the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, the Conference decided to add to its 1992 agenda an item entitled "Transparency in armaments" and to hold a series of informal meetings to address it. Five informal meetings were held on the new agenda item, during which a preliminary exchange of views was conducted. For that reason, the annual report contains an outline of various subjects addressed by delegations rather than a narrative of the different views expressed. There was general agreement in the Conference that the discussions had been useful and that the organizational framework to deal with the agenda item be taken up at the beginning of the next annual session.

In connection with the request contained in General Assembly resolution 44/116 O of 15 December 1989, the Conference devoted an informal meeting to the question of the consideration of further measures in the field of disarmament for the prevention of an arms race on the seabed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. The discussions on this subject are reflected in section J of chapter III of the annual report.

I should like to conclude my statement with a general assessment of the work of the Conference in 1992 and its future role. The historic agreement reached on the prohibition of chemical weapons and a number of steps forward

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in several subjects under consideration point to a bright future for multilateral disarmament negotiations. What ideological confrontation had made impossible before has now become achievable. With the end of the cold war, the time has come for multilateral disarmament agreements. The Conference on Disarmament now offers new opportunities to meet the challenges facing us in a world in need of further measures to strengthen international peace and security. Its decision to address such basic issues as its annual agenda and the expansion of its membership should be seen as a response to the qualitative changes in the international situation. During times of tension and clashes among States, that forum was able to negotiate several disarmament agreements that obtained wide support from the international community. Its role in the present world may indeed be decisive in the search for disarmament.

I would be remiss if I did not add a word of thanks to the Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Berasategui, and to his entire team, who were put to the test in the weeks preceding the end of our Conference. I wish to pay a public tribute to them along with my thanks.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a pleasure for me to use the occasion of the United Kingdom's first statement in the First Committee to offer you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Our personal friendship was born here in New York in 1970, and ever since I have been impressed by your diplomatic skills and experience. I take this opportunity to wish you success in guiding the Committee's work.

(spoke in English)

On behalf of the European Community and its Member States, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly and to offer best wishes and congratulations to the other officers of the Committee. I am sure that, under your able guidance, this year's session of the First Committee will be a useful and constructive one. We the Member States of the European Community offer you our fullest support for the accomplishment of the important task with which you have been entrusted.

Our work in the First Committee of the General Assembly comes at a crucial time in the field of international peace and security. The ending of the cold war has raised hopes for a safer world in which distrust and hostility derived from ideological differences are now largely things of the past. In many parts of the world authoritarian regimes have made way for more democratic and more accountable forms of government.

But, concurrently, the international community is faced with profound new challenges in the search for peace. Threats from aggressors are not themselves a thing of the past. At the same time as regional and continental associations of States are working hard to remove the basis of fear and

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mistrust amongst their component parts, peace and security are threatened by a rising tide of conflict derived from ethnic, religious, social, cultural and linguistic rivalry.

Fifteen States are progressing towards democracy where a year ago we were dealing with one - the Soviet Union. This is an event unprecedented in modern history. It is a development that represents a tremendous step forward for all the peoples that for decades were subject to oppressive Soviet rule. But it brings with it daunting new problems and challenges, for them and for us - not least, where military and proliferation issues are concerned.

The conflicts that have erupted in the former Yugoslavia present a vivid and tragic warning of the dangers associated with resurgent nationalism. With the collapse of the old central Communist regime, unscrupulous political leaders have rekindled ancient hatreds and fears in order to promote policies of conquest and oppression. But it is clear that the sparks of ethnic tension have been struck in what amounts to a powder-keg.

The capacity of these hatreds to find their full destructive expression has been made even worse by the huge stocks of arms in the country. We fully support the efforts undertaken by the co-chairmen of the steering committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to implement the decisions and uphold the principles agreed upon at the London Conference.

The global tasks and challenges facing the United Nations have become ever more pressing. The Gulf crisis and its aftermath gave renewed prominence to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter. The Community and its Member States welcome the substantial progress made by the United Nations

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Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency in eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile capability, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. This challenging and unprecedented work continues to deserve every measure of support. The Iraqis must be made to understand that the international community will continue to maintain pressure until Iraq has fully complied with all those resolutions.

The Gulf crisis has shown that the world already has an effective instrument to uphold collective security, but that there is no room for complacency. Ways are being considered to hone that instrument to enable the Special Commission to perform the task that was given to it by the Security Council at a time of global transition.

The Community and its Member States welcome the Secretary-General's report on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. We believe that it is possible to explore the potential of the Charter of the United Nations to foster the Organization's role in defusing potential conflicts and strengthening its capabilities to build and maintain peace.

The Community and its Member States will continue to be ready to offer all possible support. But laying the foundations of international peace and security is the duty of each and every State Member of the United Nations. We believe that all of us, without exception, should be active in the area of arms control and disarmament. We must commit ourselves to implementing what has already been agreed; we must commit ourselves to working towards further measures of disarmament, both regional and global. We must ensure that all of us play our full part in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass

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destruction and the accumulation of other lethal weaponry. We must, above all, seek to resolve peacefully, in accordance with the Charter, any problems concerning these matters that threaten or disrupt the maintenance of international peace and security.

I should like to review briefly the recent progress made in the field of arms control and disarmament.

We congratulate members of the Conference on Disarmament on the successful conclusion of the long-running negotiations on a chemical-weapons Convention, the text of which was transmitted to us in the Conference's report, introduced this morning by the President of the Conference, Mr. Servais. The completion of these difficult negotiations bears testimony to what can be achieved by international determination to cooperate for the benefit of mutual security. This is a historic moment. The chemical-weapons Convention is indeed the first global multilateral disarmament agreement with an effective verification regime allowing on-site inspection of any facility suspected of non-compliance. The chemical-weapons Convention also represents a welcome step in addressing regional security concerns. We hope that it will help to create the conditions in which all States may feel secure and confident enough to move on to further and more far-reaching disarmament measures.

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In banning the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons under any circumstances, the Convention will make a substantial contribution to international peace and security. Therefore, it has to be considered on its own merits and its signature should not be dependent on preconditions, in particular because the Convention constitutes a meaningful contribution to the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction. We thus look forward to the Convention's receiving a clear endorsement in the First Committee. We urge all Member States to co-sponsor and support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/47/L.1 in the First Committee. We reaffirm our intention to become early signatories of the Convention, which is to be signed in Paris at the beginning of next year, on the invitation of the French President, and we urge all nations to do likewise. When signing the Convention, the States members of the European Community will each make a declaration that, so far as trade within the Community is concerned, they will implement the Convention in the light of their commitments as States members of the Community. Meanwhile, the member States welcome the selection of The Hague as the seat of the future organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

We have already said that there is no room for complacency. Despite the progress made by the nuclear Powers in reducing their arsenals, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction threatens to increase, and we see too that conventional weapons continue to be amassed in many areas of the world.

The Community and its member States consider the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) and the complementary CFE 1A agreement on personnel

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strength of conventional armed forces in Europe to be, in these uncertain times, a force for stability in Europe. The reduction in conventional forces and the far-reaching verification regime provided for in the Treaty reflect the desire on the part of the contracting parties for a significantly greater degree of political and military stability and cooperation in Europe. We welcome the agreement at the Helsinki summit meeting in July to apply the Treaty provisionally, and encourage all States parties that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible, so that it may enter into force definitively. We furthermore welcome the Helsinki decision to implement the CFE 1A agreement concurrently with provisional application of the CFE Treaty.

The new Vienna Document 1992 marks a significant step forward in the field of confidence- and security-building measures. The new measures, which entered into force on 1 May, limit the size of exercises, oblige States to notify activation of reserve units, add to the military information exchange and provide for voluntary-hosted visits over territory of the countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to dispel security concerns.

The Community and its member States welcome the decision taken by the Helsinki summit meeting to establish a CSCE forum for security cooperation. The further development of a security dialogue, including arms control measures and conflict prevention, will be embedded in the wider framework of the CSCE process. The Community and its member States welcome the expansion of the CSCE to admit Croatia, Georgia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning of the Helsinki follow-up meeting.

We also attach the utmost priority to the Open Skies Treaty, which was signed in March. We expect that, once in force, this Treaty will make a major

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contribution to confidence-building and stability throughout the CSCE area and beyond.

With a view to the implementation of the Vienna Document 1992, the CFE Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty, we wish to draw attention to the importance of the CSCE network in ensuring a quick and comprehensive exchange of notifications and other information. To profit fully from the possibilities offered by the network, it is of great importance that all CSCE States become connected.

Against this background, the Community and its member States again underscore the importance we attach to the three priority areas we have identified in the field of arms control and disarmamemt. We are accordingly ready to continue to play our full part towards implementing what has already been agreed, working towards further measures of disarmament and arms control, whether regional or global, and ensuring that we all have in place arrangements to prevent proliferation and discourage the accumulation of lethal weaponry.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Community and its member States in the field of arms control and disarmament. While welcoming the progress that has been made in this area in recent years, our common wish remains to see further substantial reductions in the global level of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we regard nuclear proliferation as a major threat to global security and stability. As these issues affect the security of all States, we believe that nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation continue to warrant the full attention and commitment of all States Members of the United Nations.

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Recent political developments in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union have led to unprecedented progress on nuclear arms control. The Community and its member States applaud in particular the far-reaching reductions in strategic arms announced by President Bush and President Yeltsin in June 1992. This commitment is a most welcome follow-on from earlier agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union, including the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missile - INF Treaty - and the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty), and the unilateral decisions taken by the United States and Russia in autumn 1991 to eliminate their ground-launched tactical nuclear weapons. We hope that the implementation of these measures will take place in the best possible conditions of security and transparency.

The Community and its member States welcome the firm commitments made by all leaders in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to implement fully the arms control agreements of the former Soviet Union.

The two members of the Community that are nuclear-weapons States have also made a meaningful contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament, in particular by making reductions in some of their nuclear-weapons programmes.

The Community and its member States consider that, in view of the dramatic reductions in nuclear weapons now in prospect, priority should be given to the rapid and safe implementation of existing nuclear-arms-control agreements or unilateral decisions. We therefore fully support efforts made by individual States to assist Russia with the speedy elimination of nuclear weapons due for destruction.

Preventing the proliferation of expertise in building nuclear weapons is an equally important concern. The Community and its member States are

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therefore pleased to support the establishment of the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC) in Russia to fund and coordinate the peaceful employment of former Soviet military scientists. We look forward to working closely with the United States, Japan and Russia as co-founders of the ISTC, as well as with other contributor States, and look forward to the Centre's becoming operational soon.

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We welcome the further steps taken towards limiting nuclear testing, including the suspension of nuclear testing by the Russian Federation and, for 1992, by France, as well as the decision by the United States Government to reduce the number and yield of its nuclear tests. We take note of the more recent decision to take this further in terms of the suspension of nuclear testing. We also note that the United Kingdom's nuclear test programme will be kept at a minimum level. Nuclear-test-ban issues should continue to be given priority at the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva.

We believe that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and that the indefinite extension of the Treaty in its present form at the 1995 Extension Conference will be a key step in the development of that regime. The Community and its member States will work actively for a successful outcome to the 1995 Conference. The process of nuclear-arms control and reduction must be continued, and we call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty. We believe that universal accession to the Treaty and full compliance with its obligations is the best way to guarantee nuclear non-proliferation.

In this respect we particularly welcome the accession to the Treaty of the People's Republic of China, and of France. We believe that membership of the Treaty by all five permanent members of the Security Council further enhances the prospect of strengthening and consolidating the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We look to Russia, in continuing the statehood of the Soviet Union, to continue to abide by the obligations of a nuclear-weapons State under the Treaty, and we welcome the commitments made by Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States as

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soon as possible and to remove all remaining nuclear weapons from their territory during the implementation period of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty).

We welcome the accession of South Africa to the NPT, and the ratification by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its NPT-related safeguards agreement. We also attach importance to the full implementation of the bilateral agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Other positive initiatives include moves towards implementing the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. We applaud recent developments towards nuclear non-proliferation in Latin America, in particular the signing of a full-scope safeguards agreement between Argentina, Brazil and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the ratification by France of Additional Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We also welcome the decision by Argentina, Brazil and Chile that they will bring the Treaty of Tlatelolco into force for themselves as soon as they have concluded the relevant ratification procedures. All these steps bear testimony to the crucial importance of nuclear disarmamant and to the mutually reinforcing character of regional and global arms control.

The Community and its member States have strongly encouraged the IAEA in its attempts to strengthen the safeguards regime, taking into account the lessons learned in Iraq. We welcome the progress it has made so far, and call on all concerned to pursue the process. We welcome in particular the reaffirmation by the Board of Governors of the IAEA's right to conduct special inspections. This was a key item on the list of proposed improvements to

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safeguards which the Community member States presented to the Agency in September 1991.

In the field of export controls, the Community and its member States pay tribute to the work by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in agreeing a new regime to control the export of nuclear dual-use items, which could make a major contribution to the construction of nuclear weapons. This should provide a useful further barrier to proliferation. The Community and its member States note with satisfaction the decision by all members of the Group to adopt a policy of full-scope safeguards as a condition of nuclear supply, and call on all other suppliers to follow suit.

We fully support the work of the Missile Technology Control Régime (MTCR), and in particular the decision to extend the scope of the guidelines to cover missiles capable of delivering all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. The Community and its member States support the further strengthening of MTCR and encourage all countries to adopt the guidelines of the MTCR. In the more general field of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Community and its member States are playing a leading role in the deliberations and decisions of the Australia Group on preventing the spread of chemical and biological weapons, and in particular on the harmonization of national export controls on chemical weapons dual-use equipment and items and equipment related to biological weapons.

The Community and its member States strongly believe that transparency in armaments is a major tool for increasing confidence, and therefore stability, worldwide. Transparency helps to put right the misconceptions which fuel fear and mistrust. The extent of the acknowledgement of the value of transparency was reflected in the overwhelming vote last year in favour of

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resolution 46/36 L, entitled "Transparency in armaments". The full implementation of the resolution will be a vital first step towards enhanced transparency and restraint in the field of conventional arms. We reiterate our commitment made within the framework of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to provide full information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and we call upon all other States to take the same action.

The Community and its member States are heartened by the results of the deliberations of the Panel of Governmental Experts established by the resolution, which will enable all States to provide in uniform fashion the pertinent information required by the resolution. We believe that the provision of such information will help to identify irresponsible and destabilizing arms transfers. We also welcome the ongoing work in the Conference on Disarmament pursuant to resolution 46/36 L, and express the wish that the Conference on Disarmament should play a substantial role in the field of transparency in armaments.

In order to emphasize the importance we continue to attach to resolution 46/36 L, the Community member States will during this session cooperate closely with other interested Member States in presenting a further draft resolution to carry it forward.

It was also with the aim of confidence-building through transparency that objective information on military matters was proposed as an agenda item for the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are convinced that the text agreed on guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters provides a sound basis for future confidence-building endeavours. It is with this in mind that we shall be supporting, during this session, a draft

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resolution based on those guidelines and recommendations. Furthermore, we wlecome the work already started in the Conference on Disarmament following resolution 46/36 L and aiming at the further improvement of transparency in military matters beyond the scope of the United Nations register.

The Community and its member States consider that regional arms control and disarmament measures can complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations to facilitate global arms control and disarmament efforts overall. Regional measures must necessarily vary to take account of the specific characteristics of a region or regions, but we believe that it is nevertheless possible to identify certain constants. In our view, and taking account of the European experience, we believe that regional arms control and disarmament measures should focus initially on the most destabilizing military capabilities with the aim of strengthening peace and security at a lower level of forces.

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They should recognize the intrinsic value of confidence-building measures such as the exchange of information on military structures and deployments and advance notification of large-scale military exercises. Such measures, we are convinced, contribute significantly to greater openness and transparency. Regional arrangements should of course embody effective verification provisions. These, if properly applied, can further enhance confidence, leading to the further development of peace and security.

In regard to the Middle East, the Community and its member States welcome the process begun at the Madrid Peace Conference and look forward to continued bilateral negotiations in an atmosphere of confidence and trust, as well as the multilateral negotiations on regional issues, leading to a just and comprehensive peace settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We express our support for the work of the five multilateral working groups, which is a major contribution to the building of confidence between the parties engaged in the search for peace in the Middle East. We stress the readiness of the Community and its member States to participate in this process in all its aspects, in order to contribute to an early and comprehensive achievement of the aims of the negotiations.

The Community and its member States warmly welcome the cease-fire and Peace Accords signed in Rome on 4 October, which will at last bring peace to Mozambique and will allow the distribution of desperately needed assistance to the victims of drought and a start to be made in the long process of national reconstruction. We also welcome the Angolan multiparty elections of 29 and 30 September, which we hope will facilitate the reconstruction of Angola. We call on all parties not to reopen the newly healed wounds inflicted during the civil war and to respect the choice of the Angolan people.

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The Community and its member States note that the first meeting of the Convention on biological weapons Verification Experts Group took place in Geneva from 30 March to 10 April. The Group made an encouraging start to identifying and examining potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint. Further progress should be made at the next meeting, from 23 November to 4 December, and we fully support the goal of supplementing the Convention on biological and toxin weapons with an effective verification regime as soon as possible.

The Community and its member States note that not all nations are parties to this Convention, which bans the development, production and stockpiling of biological weapons. We call upon all non-parties to accede to this important international treaty as soon as possible.

We also note the insufficient response of States parties to the Convention on biological weapons in completing their 1992 annual returns on confidence-building measures (CBMs). The CBMs were enhanced and extended at the 1991 Third Review Conference, and it is urgent that all States parties should complete their returns.

The Community and its member States welcome the successful outcome of the recent Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques.

At this point, I should like to underline again the unique role of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament within the United Nations system. By achieving the conclusion of a world-wide agreement of an unprecedented complexity and encompassing a most innovative verification regime, the chemical weapons Convention, the Conference on Disarmament has demonstrated its capacity to perform challenging

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tasks effectively. With an emerging international environment requiring more and more a multilateral approach to arms control, disarmament, security and transparency, including on weapons of mass destruction, we firmly believe that the Conference on Disarmament has a major role to play. In order to enable it to assume fully its responsibilities, we support an early enlargement which would more adequately reflect the level of interest in its work of the international community as a whole, and we consider that it needs to review its agenda and organization of work in the light of the new international situation.

The Community and its member States are convinced that, against the background of international developments and the new climate prevailing in international relations, more positive attitudes have emerged towards arms control and disarmament. We now have new opportunities to try to meet the many challenges facing us. We must not let them slip away. We earnestly hope that all States share our commitment to take practical steps designed to ensure a more peaceful, secure and stable world. We hope, in this respect, that this year's session of the First Committee of the General Assembly will yield positive results.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Arabic): I appreciate Sir Michael Weston's reference to our old friendship, which he expressed in very correct and idiomatic Arabic, for which he is to be commended. I have no doubt that it has elicited feelings of admiration on the part of all Arabic-speaking representatives in the First Committee.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): I wish to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the Brazilian delegation on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. It is a matter of special satisfaction

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to us to see a highly qualified and skilful diplomat steering the work of this important body in charge of political and security matters, as it augurs a very successful outcome to our discussions.

Similar congratulations are also in order for the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Pasi Patokallio, of Finland, and Mr. Dae Won Suh, of the Republic of Korea, and for the Rapporteur, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, of Poland. A word of appreciation is also due to Mr. Robert Mroziewicz for his competent chairmanship of our Committee during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Last but not least, my delegation warmly welcomes all new Member States that are joining our Committee this year and looks forward to working with them in a constructive spirit.

During the general debate on disarmament items last year, the delegation of Brazil addressed the question of the essential interrelationship among democracy, development and disarmament, suggesting that they should constitute the foundations sustaining a new structure of peace. Likewise, during the general debate on international security items at the same session, we offered some reflections on the fundamental correlations between peace and international security, as interfacing processes for the consolidation of a just and fair world order.

This year, as we are embarking on a combined general debate of all disarmament and international security items, my delegation would like to offer some further considerations on the interconnection of those concepts and their bearing on the current activities of our Organization, particularly in the context of the current efforts for the formulation of a new agenda for peace and for development.*

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* Mr. Patokallio (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

At the opening of the general debate of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil observed,

"In times of change it is important to stop and think about the values concepts that lie at the foundation of international relations."

(A/47/PV.4, p. 7)

A pause for reflection is thus needed to clarify the outline of what is happening. Such a necessary reflection taps the possibilities of, and paves the way for, concerted action in the contemporary world.

The acceleration of world events that we have witnessed in recent times has made it incumbent upon us to evaluate thoroughly the forces currently in play, in order to enable us to steer them and control their pace.

On the one hand, we note with satisfaction that the recent momentum in the reduction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has not abated. There has been a long-overdue realization by many that the quest for military supremacy at the expense of the economic and social welfare of their populations is indeed a pyrrhic bargain.

The strengthening of democratic values in most areas of the globe has brought about a renewal in the search for the wealth of nations and has reinforced the awareness that the arms race led to the waste of nations. That conceptual conversion from confrontation to cooperation has broadened the horizon for a new type of international relations, basd on the primacy of democracy, development and disarmament.

On the other hand, the fading out of ideological rivalry at the global level has been accompanied by a reawakening of dormant prejudices and hatred in certain regions. Outbursts of intolerance, discrimination and outright strife have brutally shattered, in some instances, the foundations of civilized norms and behaviour. These events have, unfortunately, demonstrated

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that the acceleration of world events does not necessarily occur in the forward direction. I am pleased to note, Mr. Chairman, that in your opening statement from the Chair this morning, you confirmed this general assessment, which gives rise, in your words, to feelings "ranging from optimism to concern" (supra., p. 2).

Democracy is the best system to ensure peace and stability in our societies. It teaches the acceptance of diversity, promotes orderly change and manages crises through the rule of law. It is predicated on the equal rights and obligations of all citizens and the curbing of the imposition of the few over the many.

Likewise, international peace and security must be based on the democratic participation of all States in the building of a just and fair world order. It should be predicated on the recognition of the diversity of nations, the equality of sovereignty and solidarity in development. There should be a renewed understanding of collective security based not on the might of individual States but on the collective rights of the international community.

Thus, the strengthening of international peace and security calls for the strengthening of the United Nations in its entirety, indeed the balanced strengthening of its main organs, in order to allow the Organization to fulfil its rightful role in the promotion of democratic values, development and disarmament.

In the field of disarmament, there have been some auspicious developments since the last session of the General Assembly. The two major nuclear powers continued their bilateral process of reducing their most destabilizing nuclear weapons. Four nuclear Powers have observed a declared or de facto moratorium

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on nuclear tests. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has finalized the draft text of the Convention on chemical weapons, which will be presented during the current session of the General Assembly and opened for signature early next year. The Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD) took place last month in Geneva in a constructive climate. The United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus at its 1992 substantive session a set of guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters, bringing to a successful conclusion the first experiment under its new working method. The Panel of Governmental Technical Experts established by resolution 46/36 L finalized its report by consensus, recommending parameters for the effective operation of the Register of Conventional Arms. Additional Protocol I to the Treaty of Tlatelolco has now been ratified by all extra-continental or continental States having de facto or de jure international responsibility for territories situated in the zone of application of the Treaty. Argentina, Chile and Brazil have launched an initiative to ensure the full entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, under which the Latin American and Caribbean region will become the first fully nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

As auspicious as these development are, much still remains to be done in the field of disarmament. The unilateral moratoriums observed by some nuclear Powers must be urgently translated into a binding multilateral commitment by all nuclear Powers in order to achieve the discontinuation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. In this regard, we welcome the consultations being conducted by the President of the Amendment Conference of

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the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water - the Moscow Treaty - the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Ali Alatas, with a view to exploring ways to further the objective of achieving a complete nuclear test ban at the earliest possible date. Brazil stands ready to continue cooperating constructively in that endeavour.

There are still enough nuclear weapons remaining to destroy the world many times over; thus they constitute a threat to the whole international community. Recent events have underscored that nuclear-weapons proliferation is always possible as long as they exist, and may occur not only through the emergence of a new State producing its own device but also by the spread of existing arsenals. To proliferate, one needs a matrix. In order truly to eliminate the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons, all existing nuclear weapons must ultimately be eliminated.

While welcoming the beginning of the operation of the Register of Conventional Arms by next year, we note with concern the continuing international transfer of sophisticated weapons systems. It would seem quite a contradiction to seek to control the transfer of some sensitive technology with dual applications while not controlling the spread of the very weapons that incorporate these technologies.

That brings me to the question of the transfer of high technology with military applications, a question to which my delegation attaches great importance. The United Nations Disarmament Commission should conclude at its substantive session next year the deliberations on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields. It is our expectation that the Commission will be able to

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achieve substantive results that could serve as guidelines for future action on this subject.

The role of science and technology in the implementation of disarmament agreements is well established nowadays, as sophisticated equipment is used for monitoring, verification and disposal of weapons, in the context of negotiations betweeen major military Powers. In this regard, it is important to facilitate the dissemination of those technologies so that disarmament agreements may be verified and implemented by a large number of States, thus increasing international confidence.

The role of science and technology in the field of international security is a crucial theme that should occupy a prominent position in a new agenda for peace and development. As it is widely recognized that science and technology are neutral in and of themselves and that it is in their application that security implications may arise, the international community must develop clear guidelines that would clarify the question of the diffusion of science and technology for legitimate purposes.

Since there are legitimate military applications as well as legitimate civilian applications of high technology, the essence of the question lies in determining the foundations of legitimate application. A wide-ranging and in-depth discussion of this critical question by the international community should go a long way towards arriving at universally acceptable guidelines for the application and transfer of sensitive technologies which would safeguard the security concerns of States as well as their development needs.

There is undoubtedly a close relationship between disarmament and international security, and the delegation of Brazil welcomes this opportunity to address both of them in this general debate. As the Committee that deals

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with political and security-related matters, it is only fitting that we should review here all the interrelated aspects of the strengthening of international peace and security, from the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the urgent elimination of social and economic disparities within and between States. They all have a profound bearing on the consolidation of a fair and just world order in which the roots of conflict had been eradicated. It is very timely that our Organization should embark now, in all its relevant organs, on a thorough discussion of a new agenda for peace and development.

Mr. CAMARA (Guinea) (interpretation from French): I should first like to convey to the Chairman my congratulations and to express my most sincere wishes for his success in the work which he has the delicate responsibility of conducting in this Committee. His election is a tribute to his country, Egypt, for its major contribution to the common endeavour of peace and cooperation among nations. I should also like to assure the other officers of the Committee of my delegation's willingness to cooperate.

The Chairman has just given us an evaluation of the efforts undertaken this year in the process of disarmament and arms control. He has described the international context in which these important initiatives have been taken. Subsequently, various delegations and individuals have addressed the same challenges, after welcoming the positive achievements. However limited it may be in terms of the immensity of the task, this progress has lived up to our expectations, and it is our wish to see it strengthened by further achievements on a larger scale.

From this standpoint, Guinea appreciates the excellent work of the Conference on Disarmament, which after 10 years of negotiations has succeeded, at its annual session of 1992 in Geneva, in producing the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

We are particularly gratified because, as the first real multilateral instrument banning a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, this represents genuine progress towards international security. An effective means of combating the proliferation of these weapons and of putting moral pressure on States that harbour bad intentions, the Convention is universal in nature and a definite deterrent, thanks to the principle of verification.

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However, we should stress that control must be strengthened, so as not to give an offending State any opportunity to benefit from the time period allowed and its prolongation to escape the rigours of challenge inspection. Thought should be given to the imposition of sanctions. Confidence should not exclude control. Without verification there can be neither confidence nor progress; in a word, there can be no disarmament. Furthermore, the selection of chemical precursors for agricultural and industrial use should take account of the legitimate concerns of developing countries.

It is clear that the destruction of facilities will not be easy, since it will create material, financial and technological difficulties for some and will give rise to reservations from an environmental standpoint for others. But the important thing remains the existence of this valuable text, the signing of which by all States in Paris in January 1993 should be assured without delay.

In the meantime, the draft resolution (A/C.1/47/L.1) recommending it to the General Assembly - a draft which my country co-sponsored - warrants the support of all.

In the same context, the reduction of nuclear weapons, their non-proliferation and the prevention of a nuclear war must all enjoy the same successful outcome.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the encouraging example set by President Bush and President Yeltsin who, at their meeting in Washington on 18 June 1992, signed the Agreement of Principle on the reduction in two stages - between now and the year 2000 and between now and the year 2003 - of their respective countries' overall stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons. The two Presidents also agreed to work out with

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their allies and other interested States the concept of a global system of defence against limited ballistic-missile attacks. But here, financial and technological obstacles also have to be overcome, as do those connected with the recovery of the missiles in question.

In any case, even if the level of reduction is below that sought, this agreement shows that the two Powers have taken a step towards their goal of cessation of the nuclear arms race in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

President Bush, in his statement of 2 July 1992, announced the prospect of the forthcoming ratification of the START Treaty and even greater reductions. He also announced the conclusion of the withdrawal of United States tactical nuclear weapons on sea and on land. All of these measures are positive steps towards the hoped-for renewal of the non-proliferation Treaty in 1995.

The need to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty has often been stressed here in the First Committee, as has the importance of the cessation of nuclear tests, the only purpose of which can be to increase the sophistication and destructive capacity of nuclear weapons. In this period of détente and in spite of the concern for deterrence, such purposes are no longer relevant. The ratification of the non-proliferation Treaty this year by many countries, including France and China, both permanent members of the Security Council, is therefore grounds for satisfaction.

Nuclear weapons should not survive the cold war. This means that organizations or alliances, doctrines, strategic concepts, budgets and programmes must change, and arsenals must disappear, beginning with the arsenals of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

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The existence and proliferation of nuclear weapons pose a whole series of regional threats which could at any time degenerate into a world conflagration. Some parts of the world are veritable political powder-kegs. Therefore the curbing of proliferation is something we must reinvigorate by encouraging confidence-building measures regionally and globally and by strengthening existing machinery.

Other measures should also be applied or contemplated after the notification this year of a number of moratoriums or suspensions of tests. These measures are: the cessation of nuclear tests; the inspection of fissile material and a freeze on the production of such materials for military purposes; control over technology exports; political, juridical and military guarantees of non-proliferation; and acceleration of the work of the Special Committee.

I should like to take this opportunity to refer to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. These have already been identified and should be extended to other hotspots around the world.

With regard to Africa, not only should this continent be denuclearized in accordance with the Declaration adopted in July 1964 in Cairo by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), but it should also become a region free from biological, chemical and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Within the framework of promoting this regional dimension of disarmament, I should like to appeal to other countries and to the United Nations to increase their assistance to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Development in Africa, the headquarters of which is at Lomé. This Centre was created at the request of African leaders, under resolution 40/151 G adopted by consensus at the fortieth session of the General Assembly on

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16 December 1985. It was to function on the basis of existing Secretariat resources and voluntary contributions from member countries. Over the last three years, in spite of its initiatives, the Centre has confronted enormous financial difficulties which have hindered the proper exercise of its mandate precisely at the time when Africa is the scene of deadly conflicts and when the activities of the Centre should be expanded in consequence.

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On the Middle East, the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report (A/47/387), on the means of creating this zone, are very relevant. All measures, be they unilateral, bilateral or multilateral, should be conducted within the framework of peace negotiations.

Resolution 46/31, adopted last year on South Asia, is still valid in our view.

The situation in the Balkans, which is the scene of confrontations, sometimes against the background of disintegrating States, calls for urgent action on the part of the international community.

Generally speaking, we all know that over and above the stability and security which it provides, the establishment of zones of peace is enormously beneficial to economic cooperation, transport and the maintenance of ecological balance.

Of course, there must be free will, increased confidence, the settlement of conflicts, security assurances and consistency on the part of industrialized countries faced with proliferation, particularly in technology exports.

In our deliberations in the First Committee and elsewhere it has been agreed that arms limitations and disarmament concern not only weapons of mass destruction but also conventional weapons. This conviction falls squarely within the scope of resolution 41 (I) of 14 December 1946, which the General Assembly adopted at its first session, at the same time as it adopted the resolution on atomic energy.

The disastrous consequences that conventional weapons have had on security - particularly the loss of human life since the last two world wars - are immeasurable and too well known for me to comment on.

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In the light of the upheavals around the world in which armies are involved, positive developments have happily been registered. A number of regional and bilateral negotiations have been conducted and concluded. Among these I should like to mention, in Europe, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Stockholm Declaration of 1988, the Vienna Document 1990 of the Negotiations on Confidence and Security-Building Measures, and the Charter of Paris For a New Europe.

Central America has also undertaken efforts to reduce its armed forces.

In Africa it is conventional weapons that are used in conflicts that, more often than not, are domestic and greatly jeopardize peace and security. They force States or factions to divert their slender resources for purposes of warfare and are the cause of massive flows of refugees and displaced persons.

The gravity of their consequences has given the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and African leaders much to think about. Their main objective is the launching of a process leading to stability, security, development and cooperation. Thus, a consensus was forged on the document of Kampala, Uganda, as the result of a forum held from 19 to 21 May 1991.

The twenty-seventh summit meeting of the OAU, held at Dakar in July of this year, came up with some interesting proposals on the creation of machinery for the prevention and settlement of conflicts.

All these actions are important milestones in the history of the African peoples.

It is also encouraging to note that, after some tiptoeing, the international community as a whole finally decided to move boldly ahead by

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adopting the idea of setting up a register on the arms trade - not banning those arms that could be useful for national security but limiting them considerably. In the view of my delegation, such a register is highly effective because it establishes confidence and transparency. Nevertheless, it should take into account other types of material, manufacture and stockpiling. Above all, it should determine the modalities for recovering material which has been delivered.

We know that under resolution 46/36 L adopted last year, the Conference on Disarmament will be studying questions raised by the transfer of technology with military applications and weapons of mass destruction.

A meeting of governmental experts is also scheduled for 1994 to prepare a report on the Register and modifications to be made to it with reference to the conclusions of the Conference on Disarmament. In the meantime, the hope remains that Member States will respect the time limits already laid down for the supply of information and will appreciate the excellent work of the group of governmental experts before us in document A/47/342 and Corr.1.

It is absolutely imperative to call a halt to excessive armaments in order to make the relationship between disarmament and development more perceptible. It is clear that there are advantages in the reduction of troop strength and military expenditures. For developed countries it can create new jobs, spur further activities in the civilian industry and help curb inflation.

For developing countries, thanks to a reduction of their arms imports and military expenditures, the primary and secondary sectors of

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their economies would be highly developed with the corollary of a quantitative and qualitative increase in exports of consumer goods.

Putting concrete disarmament measures into effect would promote new and more effective forms of international cooperation, thus making possible an increase of aid to the poor countries in the principal realms of activities.

It is therefore regrettable that the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, the first conference of international scope on this subject, held in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987, was unable to produce a larger consensus on this important aspect of disarmament.

However, despite the difficulties of economic adjustment in the realm of disarmament, difficulties connected with control, inspection visits, confidence-building measures, and so forth, the potential gain has been computed in numerical terms by independent commissions, such as the Brandt, Palme, Brundtland and Nyerere Commissions. As a result of the work of these commissions, the Stockholm Initiative estimated, for example, that the peace dividend of $100 million per year could reach $200 million to $300 million by the year 2000.

The International Monetary Fund itself laid stress on the negative effect of military expenditures on consumption, development and growth.

Within this framework Germany is sympathetic to the symbiotic link between disarmament and development, as are the Nordic countries.

France has recommended the setting up of regional conversion funds, with a view to transferring resources from military research and development to civilian production for the benefit of the poorest

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countries. Such a conference could be convened at a time when the heavy hand of conservatism that has had its day is beginning to disappear.

A triangular relationship exists between disarmament, development and security. Security does not mean only disarmament or the taking over of the non-military dimension. It requires the prevention of crises and the restoration of peace in an environment that is still turbulent, of which we have been both the victims and the witnesses.

From this standpoint, my delegation approves the Secretary-General's recommendation in "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), which, inter alia, lays stress on the mode of rapid and effective intervention in cases of breaches of the peace and international security.

At this time of political and economic interdependence and the end of East-West rivalry, with the notion of collective security, which means solidarity among all nations, any inward-looking emphasis on national defence alone, going beyond the minimum threshold without concern for the balance to be established with international security, would be suicidal.

In this context, there is one thing that is particularly noteworthy as testimony to the peaceful sentiments and a useful reference point for scientific and technical cooperation in the military field, and that is the signing at Vienna, on 24 March 1992, of the Treaty on Open Skies, which will open up skies to overflights over 25 countries from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Furthermore, pending the outcome of the debate in the Disarmament Commission in 1993, my delegation commends the efforts of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which has issued publications, held consultations and organized seminars on the subject of evaluating the impact of science and technology on international security.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

Used for peaceful purposes, science and technology are valuable instruments for international security, thanks to the improvement, for example, of means of verification and the emergence of new technologies, control of which will make it possible to apply agreements more effectively. In this respect, the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/47/42) is very thorough.

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Collective security also requires respect for human rights and for the sovereign equality of States, the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States, a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and respect for the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Finally, collective security also means the strengthening of multilateralism - in particular the United Nations, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament - to monitor and apply sanctions after having encouraged membership.

But to achieve our disarmament goals, with nuclear disarmament our top priority, we must adapt structures and working methods to the changes that are taking place in international relations. We must be unstinting with respect to the resources that must be brought to bear.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this morning's meeting but the representative of Mauritania has asked to make a statement, and I call upon him.

Mr. OULD CHEIKH EL GHAOUTH (Mauritania) (interpretation from French): It is my pleasure through you, Sir, to convey to Ambassador Elaraby the sincere congratulations of the Mauritanian delegation on his election to the chairmanship. His well-known personal and diplomatic achievements guarantee the success of our work. My heartfelt congratulations go also to the other Committee officers, who, we know, will spare no effort in assisting the Chairman in his work.

(Mr. Ould Cheikh El Ghaouth, Mauritania)

Owing to an error in communication, my country appears among the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.1, entitled "Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons".*

As members know, Mauritania is not represented in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and it was therefore impossible for my country adequately to follow the preparatory process for this important legal instrument. To correct this, the countries of the Arab Group have decided to adopt a common position and together to study attentively the provisions of the draft Convention, particularly in the context of the security and stability of our region and of the Arab world, which we hope will lead to its ultimately being free of all weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, any decision on sponsorship of the draft resolution lies with the Arab Group. The withdrawal of our sponsorship does not mean we have any particular difficulties with the purpose and scope of the draft Convention, whose successful completion we welcome.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

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* The Chairman returned to the Chair.